

Questioned Documents Unit (QDU)

Facilitation of Document Examinations by Other Forensic Laboratories

1 Purpose

To establish the procedures for temporarily transferring evidentiary items or images of items to other forensic laboratories for the purpose of facilitating forensic document examinations.

2 Scope

These procedures apply to QDU employees who recognize the need to temporarily transfer evidentiary items or images of items to other forensic laboratories for the purpose of facilitating forensic document examinations due to resources or equipment not available in the FBI Laboratory.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Upon recognizing the need for an examination that is not conducted in the FBI Laboratory, the QDU employee will:

- Determine the facilitating laboratory that is best equipped to facilitate the examination.
- If the transfer of evidentiary items is necessary, as is the case with destructive examinations, record contributor consent or non-consent for the use of a facilitating laboratory on an *Activity and Communication Log* (7-245), or Case Communication Log in Forensic Advantage (FA).
- Upon contributor consent, prepare appropriate administrative records to accompany the items or images to be transferred.
- Contact the facilitating laboratory and transfer the items/images and appropriate records either in person or by FedEx. If only the transfer of images is required, these may be transferred electronically.
- Ensure the transfer of evidentiary items is recorded on a *Chain-of-Custody Log* (7-243), or equivalent in FA, as appropriate.

4 Procedures

4.1 Upon receipt of items in the QDU, the employee will determine if the FBI Laboratory is equipped to conduct all appropriate document examinations on the submitted items. Upon recognizing the need for a document examination that is not conducted in the FBI Laboratory, the employee will determine if another forensic laboratory can conduct the requested examinations. If destructive examinations are required (excluding splitting the sides of an

envelope or removing spiral rings from notebooks for ESDA purposes), the employee will contact the contributor and record contributor consent or non-consent to proceed with destructive examinations. If consent is granted, the evidence will be provided to the other forensic laboratory. Contributor consent/non-consent will be recorded on the *Activity and Communication Log* (7-245), or Case Communication Log in FA.

4.2 Upon recorded consent, the QDU employee will prepare the following administrative records to accompany the items to the other laboratory:

- A copy of the request for examinations that was submitted with the items.
- An electronic formal request on official Bureau letterhead that includes appropriate administrative information.

4.3 The QDU employee may deliver the items to the other forensic laboratory in person or by FedEx. If only images of the items are required for the completion of the requested examination (e.g., **Redacted** orange postal barcode examinations), the images may be submitted electronically or saved to a disk and submitted in person or by FedEx.

4.3.1 For Legacy cases, if the evidence is sent via FedEx, the following information will be recorded on the QDU examiner's *Chain-of-Custody Log* (7-243a):

Items	Delivered By	Accepted By	Date	Remarks
(Q/K) for Legacy cases	(QDU employee)	(Mailroom employee)	(Date)	To (laboratory)
	QDU			
(Q/K) for Legacy cases	(Mailroom employee)	FedEx (Tracking #)	(Date)	

Figure 1: Example of information to be recorded on *Chain-of-Custody Log*

4.3.2 For cases in FA, if the evidence is sent via FedEx, the evidence will be transferred out and back in to the Laboratory and recorded electronically in the Case Chain-of-Custody. The FedEx tracking number will be recorded in the Comments field. In the majority of instances, the recording of the FedEx tracking will occur after the QDU employee's evidence transfer to the mailroom employee and will require the forwarding of the *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice* (7-264 or 7-264 LIMS) to the QDU.

4.3.3 If the images are submitted to the facilitating laboratory electronically, electronic versions of the administrative records will be included as well.

4.4 Prior to mailing the items to the other forensic laboratory, the QDU employee will complete a *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice* (7-264 or 7-264 LIMS), and deliver the items to the FBI mail room.

(Note: The QDU employee may have to wait for the return of the 7-264 before recording the FedEx tracking number on *Chain-of-Custody Log* (7-243a), or equivalent in FA.)

4.5 Upon receipt of the items from the other facilitating laboratory, the QDU employee will record the incoming FedEx number in the appropriate block of the *Chain-of-Custody Log* (7-243a), or equivalent in FA.

4.6 It will be the responsibility of the facilitating laboratory, where applicable, to forward any original report from the facilitating laboratory to the contributor. In addition, the facilitating laboratory will forward a copy of its report to the FBI Laboratory.

4.6.1 Copies of the facilitating laboratory's report and request records will be retained in the case file.

5 References

FBI Laboratory Operations Manual

FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual

QDU Quality Assurance Manual

QDU Standard Operating Procedures Manual

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
5	03/01/18	3.1 bullet 2, deleted “equivalent”, added “Case Communication” 4.1 deleted “then” “have the other laboratory conduct examination(s) of the submitted items” “equivalent”, added “to proceed with destructive examinations. If consent is granted, the evidence will be provided to the other forensic laboratory, “Case Communication Log” 4.2, bullet 1, deleted “Electronic Communication or incoming letter”, added “request for examinations”, bullet 2, added “An electronic”, deleted “to the FBI Laboratory”, at last bullet.
6	09/26/19	Section 4.1 added “(excluding splitting the sides of an envelope or removing spiral rings from notebooks for ESDA purposes.)” Section 4.2 deleted “the following” and list of six requirements for an electronic formal request and added “appropriate administrative.” Section 4.3.2 deleted “transfer” and “o” in on “Record” and added “transferred out and back in to the Laboratory and” “electronically.”

Redacted - Signatures on File

Approval

Questioned Documents
Unit Chief

Date: 09/24/2019

Questioned Documents
Technical Leader

Date: 09/24/2019

QA Approval

Quality Manager

Date: 09/24/2019